GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2689
ANSWERED ON:09.08.2000
FERTILITY OF LAND
HARIBHAI PARTHIBHAI CHAUDHARY

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether fertility of the drought prone areas is bound to decline;

(b) if so, the efforts made to increase the fertility of such areas during the last two years; and

(c) the progress made in this regard during the said period?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO)

(a) Yes, Sir. The soils of drought prone areas are, in general, low in organic carbon content and low in available nutrient content. These soils mostly belong to arid eco system regions marked by long, dry spells with very low cropping intensity.

(b) Generally, the fertility of soils improves with improvement in moisture availability to the soil. The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is advocating Integrated Nutrient Management with greater recycling of organic resources to build up soil fertility.

The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is implementing various land based programmes namely

i) Soil Conservation in the catchments of River Valley Projects (RVP) and Flood Prone Rivers (FPR).
ii) National Watershed Development Project in Rainfed Areas.
iii) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas and
iv) Reclamation of Alkali Soils, to minimise soil erosion/land degradation which ultimately result into enhanced fertility/productivity in the rainfed/catchment areas of the country. In addition to the above, the State Governments implement their own Plan Schemes for improving fertility of such areas in their States.

(c) During the last two years, an area of 17.80 lakh ha. has been treated/developed under the various Schemes of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation at a total cost of Rs.681.5 crores.